Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel Claims 1, 5-7, 15-29. Please amend Claims 40, 41 and 46.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1.-39. (canceled)

40. (currently amended) A [[The]] compound ~~according to claim 1, wherein the compound is~~ represented by a structural formula selected from:

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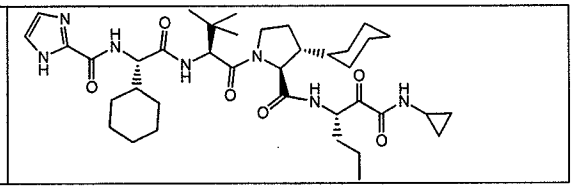

or

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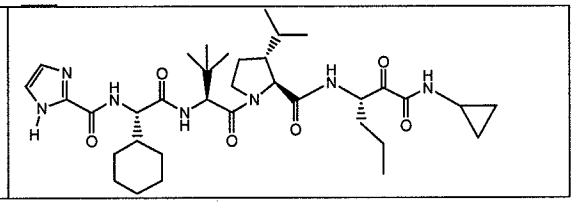

41. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim [[1]] 40 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or mixtures thereof in an amount effective to inhibit a serine protease; and a acceptable carrier, adjuvant or vehicle.

42. (original) The composition according to claim 41, wherein said composition is formulated for administration to a patient.

43. (original) The composition according to claim 42, wherein said composition comprises an additional agent selected from an immunomodulatory agent; an antiviral agent; a second inhibitor of HCV protease; an inhibitor of another target in the HCV life cycle; and a cytochrome P-450 inhibitor; or combinations thereof.

44. (original) The composition according to claim 41, wherein said immunomodulatory agent is α-, β-, or γ-interferon or thymosin; said antiviral agent is ribavirin, amantadine, or telbivudine; or said inhibitor of another target in the HCV life cycle is an inhibitor of HCV helicase, polymerase, or metalloprotease.

45. (original) The composition according to claim 43, wherein said cytochrome P-450 inhibitor is ritonavir.

46. (withdrawn - currently amended) A method of inhibiting the activity of a serine protease comprising the step of contacting said serine protease with a compound according to claim [[1]] 40.

47. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 46, wherein said serine protease is an HCV NS3 protease.

48. (withdrawn) A method of treating an HCV infection in a patient comprising the step of administering to said patient a composition according to claim 42.

49. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 48, comprising the additional step of administering to said patient an additional agent selected from an

immunomodulatory agent; an antiviral agent; a second inhibitor of HCV protease; an inhibitor of another target in the HCV life cycle; or combinations thereof; wherein said additional agent is administered to said patient as part of said composition according to claim 42 or as a separate dosage form.

50. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 49, wherein said immunomodulatory agent is α-, β-, or γ-interferon or thymosin; said antiviral agent is ribavarin or amantadine; or said inhibitor of another target in the HCV life cycle is an inhibitor of HCV helicase, polymerase, or metalloprotease.

51. (withdrawn) A method of eliminating or reducing HCV contamination of a biological sample or medical or laboratory equipment, comprising the step of contacting said biological sample or medical or laboratory equipment with a composition according to claim 41.

52. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 51, wherein said sample or equipment is selected from blood, other body fluids, biological tissue, a surgical instrument, a surgical garment, a laboratory instrument, a laboratory garment, a blood or other body fluid collection apparatus; a blood or other body fluid storage material.

53. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 52, wherein said body fluid is blood.

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph at page 14, line 28 through page 15 line 30, with the following amended paragraph.

J is halogen, -OR', $-NO_2$, -CN, $-CF_3$, $-OCF_3$, -R', oxo, thioxo, =N(R'), =N(OR'), 1,2-methylenedioxy, 1,2-ethylenedioxy, $-N(R')_2$, -SR', -SOR', $-SO_2R'$, $-SO_2N(R')_2$, $-SO_3R'$, -C(O)R', -C(O)C(O)R', -C(O)C(O)OR', -C(O)C(O)NR', $-C(O)CH_2C(O)R'$, -C(S)R', -C(S)OR', -C(O)OR', -OC(O)R', $-C(O)N(R')_2$, $-OC(O)N(R')_2$, $-C(S)N(R')_2$, $-(CH_2)_{0-2}NHC(O)R'$, -N(R')N(R')COR', -N(R')N(R')C(O)OR', -N(R')N(R')CON(R')$_2$, $-N(R')SO_2R'$, $-N(R')SO_2N(R')_2$, -N(R')C(O)OR', -N(R')C(O)R', -N(R')C(S)R', $-N(R')C(O)N(R')_2$, $-N(R')C(S)N(R')_2$, -N(COR')COR', -N(OR')R', $-C(=NH)N(R')_2$, -C(O)N(OR')R', -C(=NOR')R', $-OP(O)(OR')_2$, $-P(O)(R')_2$, $-P(O)(OR')_2$, or -P(O)(H)(OR'); wherein;

R' is independently selected from:

hydrogen-,

(C1-C12)-aliphatic-,

(C3-C10)-cycloalkyl- or -cycloalkenyl-,

[(C3-C10)-cycloalkyl or -cycloalkenyl]-(C1-C12)-aliphatic-,

(C6-C10)-aryl-,

(C6-C10)-aryl-(C1-C12)aliphatic-,

(C3-C10)-heterocyclyl-,

(C3-C10)-heterocyclyl-(C1-C12)aliphatic-,

(C5-C10)-heteroaryl-, and

(C5-C10)-heteroaryl-(C1-C12)-aliphatic-;

~~wherein up to 5 atoms in R' may be optionally and independently substituted with J;~~

wherein two R' groups bound to the same atom may optionally form a 5- to 6-membered aromatic or a 3- to

7-membered saturated or partially unsaturated ring system wherein up to 3 ring atoms may be optionally replaced with a heteroatom independently selected from N, NH, O, S, SO, and SO_2, wherein said ring system may be optionally fused to a (C6-C10)aryl, (C5-C10)heteroaryl, (C3-C10)cycloalkyl, or a (C3-C10)heterocyclyl[[,]] ~~wherein any ring has up to 3 substituents selected independently from J~~;